

2/27/14

Week 9: Water for Life

From: 7/30/13

Sheri Rose Shepherd

Betty: Welcome to *LIFE Today*! I'm Betty Robison and this is James.

James: And we've got one of the first guests we ever had on *LIFE Today*.

Now I've been on television for goodness, more than 40 years. We started back in 1968; some of you know the story. This is our 50th anniversary in ministry but I've been on television more than 40 years because Billy Graham said he heard God tell him that I was supposed to be on television.

I said, "Billy, you're on television. You be on all the time."

He said, "No, you need to be on all the time, I'll be on in the crusades from time to time."

But that's how it started. But we went from the preaching in the crusades ourselves on television, doing a weekly, we went to a daily and God led us to do what we call *LIFE Today*.

But we needed some really good guests and we heard about Sheri Rose Shepherd. She was Mrs. United States. And sure enough, you can see her, we cut back, there she was such a beautiful, beautiful Mrs. United States, and what a wonderful guest. We had many guests like her, I guess is the reason we lasted, and you, and praise God for the viewers... but we had to have good guests and Sheri is back with us.

Would you welcome Sheri Rose Shepherd back to *LIFE Today*?

Sheri, good to see you. Now you're still Mrs. United States as far as I'm concerned.

Sheri: Well, 17 years ago, I do age so get over it because I have.

[Laughter]

So I'm not trying to -- I'm 52 now, I'm a grandma. I've been married 25 years. It's been seven of the best years of my life. I'm happy.

[Laughter]

James: That's pretty good! Seven out of 25 -- that's pretty good!

Sheri: And I'm not dying before this man, and let any woman reap the benefits of my tears and training -- that's for sure!

James: Okay! Well, you wrote a book about some of this, it is called *Your Heart's Desire*. I think this is a fairly new book. I think you have a teaching series along the line and DVD teaching and all of that.

Let me just say right up front so you might want to go ahead and write this down. You say, "What if we wanted what Sheri is doing?" Because when you hear her, you're going to say, "Well, the journey she's been on and she's on will be very helpful to us." Web site -- where would they go?

Sheri: BibleLifeCoaching.com.

James: And you have quite a bit of material there. She may mention some of it a little bit later but *Your Heart's Desire*. Now you are telling us because this kind of got back to us that here you are a teacher and doing all this stuff for the glory of God and helping people and yet, the wheels seemed to start coming off in some different places. Cut to the chase and tell us some of the things that have gone on.

Sheri: Well, first of all, because I was a Christian, I thought I would be -- and doing the Lord's work -- I was positive I would be protected from anything ever coming against my marriage. In 2007, I was on FOCUS ON THE FAMILY, I was their number one show and I was asked to write a book on raising up our sons to be godly husbands, preparing him for the other woman. And that book, right before I went to turn it in, I got scared that a demonic attack would come on me and my family because of going after the next generation boy. So I wanted to change my mind and the publisher said, "If you're really afraid of the attack that will come on you, we'll release you of your contract."

My son was a senior in high school at the time and I said, "Jake, you've been a privilege to raise. You've made me look really good as a mom. Thanks for that, but you're

moving out, your senior year, it's over. I need to know up front when you move out, are you going to rebel against God before I release a book on raising sons?"

[Laughter]

James: What a conversation!

[Laughter]

Sheri: I was keeping it real. And he said, "No, mom. I'm good. Push send! Get the manuscript out there. Go out there!"

So anyway, I pushed send and we started doing together mother/son, Mother of Boys conferences, which I'm now doing again, God has resurrected those this year but now I'm really scared.

But in that my husband had gotten a job that we had prayed for and we had really good boundaries in our marriage and this job broke all those boundaries, and within three or four months we were separated.

And my son got the news and he walked away from the Lord and at 18 and a half after he moved out, started using drugs and alcohol. I had all these contracts with churches to do Mother/Boys conferences and I was in the public eye of ministry.

I had a little girl. We have an 11 year spread between our kids. God has a sense of humor. I got pregnant the night before my husband's surgery.

[Laughter]

In that my little girl and I ended up moving in with a friend, a Christian friend in ministry that was kind of taking care of us because I was emotionally pretty much out of it. So I would go speak on the weekends. I kept asking these churches, please let me out of this. I really am not in a good place. "He's strong in your weakness; get on the plane!"

I'd cry the whole way, cry all the way back. And then one night, honestly, when my daughter was like, "God doesn't answer prayer; does he, Mommy? Our family is never coming back. Where are our boys?"

And I, for the first time, I'm a born again Jew so I've always been on fire for God and never had -- I've had my faith shaken but I've never had my faith taken -- my faith was taken. I really felt like God had forsaken me. And because my parents had been married and divorced three times each, I'd already been a part of five blended families. I felt like I had done everything God had asked me to do out of obedience to him and took the kids to church and prayed and stayed faithful to my husband -- all those things. Now I'm sitting here totally helpless and can't control my boys in the public eye of ministry and I really felt God had forsaken me.

I had this moment where after I tucked my little girl in bed and she fell asleep crying, I fell to my knees and I said, "God, I waited forever for a family. I've never had one before and now this family is taken from me. If you don't give me back my family, I don't want to be in the ministry anymore. I'm quitting."

I felt like the Lord said to me, "Was my death on the cross not enough for you to follow me? Are you really going to judge me by a man's actions?" And in that moment, God showed me that I needed to lay my Isaacs down. That my family had become a god more than God and that I needed to not let anybody, including my own husband control my faith in God. So I laid down my happily ever after and started to live for heavenly ever after and realized that I couldn't change anything but myself.

So I told my boys, I'm going to follow Christ and if God continues to open up the door for me to speak at women's conferences, which he has, it's been 22 years of speaking at women's events, and I said, I'm going to move forward with God. Because I realized that at the end of my life, even if I didn't get my husband back, even if my son never returned to the Lord, I would be the great, great, great grandmother that was remembered as a woman that loved and obeyed God in spite of everybody's actions. I knew the only thing I could control was my own legacy of faith. I just held onto that promise. Those who love and obey God will bless a thousand generations.

It was painful, but in the moment that I laid down my white picket fence, God showed me the peace that passes understanding in a way that I've never understood before. He became my husband and after that, I ended up writing a book, *His Princess Bride* for singles and widows and divorced and it won the 2010 book of the year. Beth Moore won 2009, I won, 2010, the same award! So God used my pain to pour onto these pages.

Now that I've celebrated 22 years of ministry, every weekend I'm out at a women's retreat or a women's conference and I have heard so much pain caused by men and women and divorce and just yuck, I couldn't take it anymore. So I took the book and took the 14 things that are destroying us. And so this book really is for the divorced,

the single, the broken hearted, and the hard miserable marriage. That's really what I hit is all that.

And once I told my family, my boys what I was doing, a few months later my son goes, "If you're going to follow God without a single prayer answered, then so am I." And he went into full-time ministry at the Los Angeles Dream Center.

During that time, my husband started to date me again and we started to repair our marriage. And we, like I said, just celebrated 25 years of marriage. And it's a hard marriage; when there's a lot of damage done, it is a daily laying down of your own hurts, a daily laying down forgiveness. There are salts that can hit the wound that wake it up. But we're together for better or for worse, until death do us part or I kill him --

[Laughter]

James: I like the way you go ahead and tell it like it is. I love it! I do. I love you, Sheri.

Sheri: I'm sorry, I have no censor.

[Laughter]

James: That's an incredible story.

Don't you thank God for where she is even at this point in her journey?

Our journeys kind of track along together. I talked about you coming out when we first started. You've continued to pray for us and we have for you.

Sheri: When I first became a Christian, your crusade anchored my ministry.

James: Praise God!

Sheri: I knew it was God through you but I praised the Lord because --

James: It was there in that crusade where Billy Graham came to get me to go on television, right out there. So all these things happen at the same time. Interestingly too, we're talking about our pasts -- what is your son's name?

Sheri: His name is Jacob.

James: Jacob... and Jacob is at the Dream Center so when she says Dream Center, Los Angeles Dream Center, and I think about Matthew Barnett. And I think about me being right out there with him when he just started and somebody gets killed on the front of the church right there. And Tommy Barnett was your pastor for a long time.

I look at this and we -- we, that's you, that's all the people who love *LIFE*, we helped the Dream Center get started. We helped them begin their feeding. We helped them refurbish the beautiful hospital to make it into a Dream Center to help the people, the downtrodden, and now there's your son out there. He's come back.

Sheri: Well, now he is in North Carolina because he's served there but then he met -- then he went on the road with me and went back into ministry with me, and he met his wife and this southern girl stole my son!

James: And followed your instructions about marriage and married a godly boy and the whole bit.

Sheri: And I love her! I love my southern daughter-in-law. She now works for our ministry, actually.

James: Is she a North Carolina girl?

Sheri: She's a North Carolina girl. She's got a southern little accent. She's real cute.

James: I've had great crusades all over North Carolina. She probably got saved in one.

Sheri: She probably did! I wouldn't doubt it.

James: You need to ask her; she may have. But you know it is so wonderful to see where God has brought you. But the pain, and you and your husband are doing good now?

Sheri: A lot better; God's trusted me with pain. I used to feel sorry for myself because why this --

James: I said "husband" and you said "pain." Now how are you going to take that? I think she meant it exactly like that.

Sheri: I did mean it that way. But yes, I know that I don't any longer look at it like why me? Now I just look at God, what do you want me to do with this pain? Because you've trusted me with it, what am I going to do with it? And I lost my Jewish family, as you know, when I became a Christian. I shared that in your first show and now my entire Jewish family is born again. But it was a 10 year battle of no family. And everybody is saved: Cousins, uncles, everybody is born again through our whole family. And the Bible hit our Jewish family but it was a 10 year battle.

So I've got to watch a son in rebellion come back to the Lord and got to see a marriage restored. And so my mom, I didn't have a relationship with her growing up and I loved her the most when she deserved it the least and it was hard. Today she lives with me and I take care of her in her older years. So I've watched how God does not waste pain.

And my passion is... my message that I do at crusades is "Dancing on the Battlefield" -- that is my message because those battles don't seem to be going away so I feel like if we don't have that eternal perspective on our lives, then we're going to be just tossed from here to there by circumstance. I don't know about you but I get to a point where I'm sick of being affected by everybody else and by my circumstance. So at some point you just have that breakthrough where you say, "For better or for worse Jesus, I'm going to follow you with or without a husband, with or without the life I wanted."

The thing God showed me now is my life I wanted, everybody has a life they wanted or dreamed about, but the life I wanted means nothing compared to the legacy I'm going to leave when I'm gone for following Christ for better, for worse. Right now I'm generational driven, eternally driven and now we just started up our Mother/Boys conferences and we do conferences for divorced and single because --

Betty: And that's what your book is about, to be a help to women?

Sheri: I want to take the pressure off the pastors too because there is just so much hurt. So yeah, I kind of took a Bible study book and talked about what nobody wants to talk about.

James: If pastors wanted to get the material, they go to your web site?

Sheri: If pastors want my material, I'll give it to them free because I love what they do for the body of Christ and I wouldn't feel comfortable taking pastors' money.

James: What do you tell divorced people?

Sheri: I say this. No matter where you stand, if it is possible as far as it depends on you, don't let the impossible ex-husband paralyze you from giving and receiving God's love. I try to give them that perspective. Take the pain and do something with it. I'm compassionate because I know that pain and it's hard to push through pain when you're in it. It is just oh! But it is harder to waste the pain. So I think you have to literally purpose yourself, "God, I trust you in this pain. I don't know what you're going to do with it, God but your will be done. Use it how you choose."

For me, I never thought I'd be in ministry at all. I never thought about -- of course, being dyslexic I barely got out of high school with D's. I certainly never thought about being an author. And even that, I asked God to heal my learning disorder and I'm one of the only best-selling authors that has written more books than I've ever read in my lifetime. I just haven't -- I had a English teacher as you know --

James: Nobody knew you wrote them backwards -- it's amazing! It's amazing!

Sheri: And you remember before, an English teacher told me I was born to lose in life. You could but God has a bigger plan and you don't put a period where he has a comma.

James: And you speak in chapter titles. Like I loved her the most when she deserved it the least. I mean she just speaks chapter titles. It's just coming out. And then you build on them, you get a thought and you build a paragraph and then you build a chapter, and you build a book, *Your Heart's Desire*. Everybody has those.

Interestingly, Sheri, you and I have faced difficulties. You know a little bit about my past and my life and of course, Betty has had the difficulty of living with my life.

Sheri: Yeah, I'm sorry!

[Laughter]

James: What did she say? She said, "I'm sorry"?

[Laughter]

Hallelujah! Thank you for praying for her. I've got a lot of people praying for her.

Sheri: But I love you!

James: I feel better already! This counseling really helps. You know what's really happened on my journey because God is so involved in my life with my pain or my challenges and Betty's pain and both of us together walking through it. You know we lost our daughter right after Christmas, that's heavy. I've asked the Lord to help me bind up other broken hearts as mine is bound up.

Here's the thing that occurred to me just listening to you even and people wanting to live their life out. The Lord really has fulfilled our dreams. It's just been amazing. I found myself being lost -- by being lost meaning really found in this, being really where I purpose to be. I want to see Jesus' dreams fulfilled. I want to see his heart's desire fulfilled. I really believe his heart's desire is what his father's was and that's to have a family that loved him as father and loved one another as family, starting with marriage.

So I'm praying for this healing to come. I'm watching it and it's wonderful. You're having a part in it. I want to say thank you. Thank you for helping us start *LIFE Today*, thank you for walking out the pain and bless God for what's happened with Jacob and your husband, who is no longer a pain. You're such a joy! We want to thank you for that.

Would you say thanks to Sheri for being such a blessing to us on *LIFE Today*? Tell her your story and it's in *Your Heart's Desire*. I hope you'll get it. I hope you'll look there on the web site -- there it is and see what can we use in our church or Bible study or our group to help people because Sheri is gifted to do just that and she's walked it out and she knows.

Sheri, we do something that our viewers love. Everything we do our viewers love. They like to help people. If it works, they want to do it. And giving water to the thirsty, Jesus said a cup of water -- well, if you're thirsty or if it is filthy and you suddenly can have clean water, what a miracle! We can be a part of a miracle... a much needed miracle! Watch!

On the mission field

Announcer: The death of a child is the tragic result of having no choice but to drink contaminated water. Waterborne illness is a killer that knows no boundaries.

Miriam lives in a shack in Central America. She had to watch her son die in her arms because the only water source she has is a contaminated river.

On a windswept hill in Madagascar, small graves serve as a painful reminder to the grieving parents that had to give their children dirty water to drink.

Pitch is a young mother from a small village in Cambodia. She knows the water she collects is filled with contaminants but she has no other options. One of her children has already died and the other is sick.

Thousands of miles away in drought-stricken Angola, the rural hospitals cannot keep up with the number of children dying from waterborne diseases.

Stories like these are all too common to thousands of families living in poverty around the world. They desperately need someone to share the gift of life with them -- the gift of clean water.

[Water splashing]

[Children laughing]

End of clip

In the studio

James: Boy, that's a beautiful picture! That scene of that mother weeping with one child there, with another one already gone. Knowing how much she would like to have that baby back and how she doesn't want to lose another.

Betty and I losing Robin after Christmas, and some of you knew about her battle for life with cancer. I don't think there is a viewer of *LIFE Today* anywhere in the world that if you could have gotten to our daughter that wouldn't have said, "I've got the answer, and this will really work." You think it wouldn't have made Betty and me happy, and her children, and her husband, and the rest of her siblings?

Well, believe me when I tell you, we have the perfect cure for what ails most of those children you just saw. Betty, we went from country to country to country, and we are deliberately targeting purposely 12 nations that the missionaries have pointed us to situations like some of those you just saw where they desperately need water and we know it is there.

In other words, it is accessible. It is not like false hope. All we need to do is put a well in, case it, to keep it clean, give them a mechanical pump and, Betty, they've got the miracle. The miracle we as parents hoped for, the miracle those parents hope for and that mother was hoping for that was holding that little child.

Betty: Absolutely, James. And as I saw that mother sitting there with one baby in her arms, and wiping the tears away from her face because she had lost one, I know what those tears feel like, the pain feels like. That mother is hurting because of the child she lost but she doesn't want to lose the other child. This child can be saved if we will just get the water wells dug and the pure clean water to them. It is a simple way but it has to be done. She's done all she knows she can do. She still has to give her child that dirty water, contaminated water because that's all they've got. But we can offer a choice, a difference for them. Won't you please help us do this?

James: Yeah, we can fulfill the hope and longing in her heart and we can heal the hurt in the future and I'm asking you to do it. I want you to just get up and move from wherever you are, go online, LifeToday.org or just go over to the telephone, get your purse or your wallet or whatever and get your bankcard or you can go get a checkbook. I'd like you to do it now.

If you make a check, make it to *LIFE*. If you pick up the phone, call us and tell us what you're giving. And use your bankcard like a check or you can go to LifeToday.org and do it.

But here's the thing, we are asking God with your help to be able to drill 500 wells this year, the most ever in a year in 12 countries. Some of you could drill one. I told you years ago, Betty and I committed, God, we want to drill one every time the call comes. Please help us, and boy, he has. We've been able to do it; sometimes more because we ask God to let us do it.

So you may be able to do it. If you can give a well do it or a portion of a well, \$1200 and three people join you, we've got a well; \$2400 just one person join you; \$48 -- yes, a gift of \$48, ten people water the rest of their life! \$144 -- 30 people.

We have some beautiful gifts to send you but you're giving the greatest gift of all, you are giving people a chance at life and we're going to tell them about the life of God to be found in Christ, the love that prompted the gift of the water. Water for Life, we're going to tell you about the water of life. It is the water of life inspiring us to give you life.

Would you please go to the phone right now or go online? Make the gift God put on your heart. We'll send some special gifts to you to bless you and to say thank you.

Begin video clip

Announcer: Every day millions of children are forced to make a dreadful choice: drink filthy, polluted water filled with deadly disease or die from thirst. No child should ever be faced with this decision.

The good news is there is a solution! *Mission Water for Life* is one of the most exciting and viable demonstrations of God's love in the world today. Suffering can end because clean water changes everything.

With your gift today we can establish and drill 500 new water wells for remote villages in over 12 different nations. Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for 5 people. A gift of \$48 will help provide for 10 people; \$72 will impact 15 people. And \$144 will help provide fresh, clean, disease-free water for 30 people for a lifetime!

With your gift be sure to request the *Awaken Now* audio series, a once-in-a-lifetime gathering of 23 anointed speakers proclaiming a powerful message for every believer in God's kingdom. With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request *Awaken Now* on both audio and video, along with the companion book containing the speaker's sermons and encouraging messages.

Finally, please prayerfully consider a gift of \$1,200 to help provide water for 250 people or a gift of \$4,800 to help sponsor a complete well. And be sure to request our new commemorative sculptured glass statue, "The Blessing."

Please call, write, or make your secure gift online today!

End of clip

Begin video clip

>> Don't order them if you don't want to be changed because it will change your life.

>> If you're wondering about how can you make an impact and what is it going to take and why aren't things changing? This *Awaken* series is absolutely going to fill in all those blanks.

>> If you're a believer, you need to hear what has been said at this conference.

>> Absolutely! It is a now word for a now time.

>> A now word – that's a good way to put it! It's a now word.

End of clip

In the studio

James: Here is Sheri Rose Shepherd's book, *Your Heart's Desire*. I want to remind you again, there's her web site. The book is awesome; it will take you through a journey of love and hope and help. You might want to access some of her other material. Find out where she is going to be speaking; get her to come speak in your area. Would you join Betty and me in saying thanks to Sheri?

Thank you, Sheri! We love you, Sheri, very, very much.

Thank you! Thank you so much for helping us share life and give water. Thank you!